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ABSTRACT

The Institute for Business, Industry and Government was established at Orange County Community College (New York) in April 1984 for the purpose of providing high quality, cost-effective training taught by qualified professionals at convenient locations and to develop methods of measuring training effectiveness. Since its first year of offering training programs, the institute has boosted its attendance from 477 persons in 25 programs to 1,131 persons in 62 programs. The institute offers seminars, workshops, and courses in topics related to business management, small businesses, and entrepreneurship. Other services that the institute offers to the business community include individualized counseling for potential exporters and importers, counseling for potential and present business owners, and training to women and minority group members who either own or want to own a business. The institute also serves as a resource clearinghouse for local business persons through its linkages with influential agencies, and it collaborates with other local agencies and organizations to cosponsor programs pertinent to specific audiences within the business community. Another service offered by the institute is that of grant writing on behalf of local for-profit organizations seeking training grants available through the New York State Department of Education. The institute and its programs have been well received, with 95 percent of those who have used its services rating them as excellent. (MN)

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Institute for Business, Industry and Government: Serving Training Needs Locally

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The economic climate of the 1980's demands that business, industry and government organizations train and retrain their employees much more frequently than in the past in order to keep pace with technology, to compete in an area of rapid economic growth, and to maintain profitable operations in the face of increasing international competition.

According to the National Alliance of Business, in its report, "Employment Policies: Looking to the Year 2000", small businesses give two out of every three Americans their first job, thereby contributing greatly to the education and training of the US workforce. However, the NAB also reports that by the year 2000, between five and fifteen million service jobs will become obsolete, and between five and fifteen million manufacturing jobs will be restructured. Therefore, retraining will become a necessity if employees are to remain employable.

Faced with statistics such as these, the necessity for a local agency which is sensitive and responsive to the training needs of the area's business and government community has become clear.

In response to these needs and on the recommendation of a task force of business, industry and education leaders in Orange County, the Institute for Business, Industry and Government (IBIG) was established at Orange County Community College in April 1984. The mission of IBIG was to "provide high quality, cost effective training taught by qualified professionals at locations convenient for participants, and to develop methods to measure training effectiveness".

The Institute's activities are guided by an Advisory Council, comprised of many of the original task force members and others who aid the Institute in keeping abreast of legislative, economic and social trends which affect the well-being of the business community of Orange County.

Awareness Grows; Services Expand

Since its first year of offering training programs to the public, attendance has grown from 477 persons in 25 programs (in the 16-month period from April 1984 to September 1985) to 1,131 persons in 62 programs in the 12 - month period from September 1986 to September 1987.

Instructors from OCCC and State University of New York (SUNY) faculty, independent consulting firms, and local businesses lend their expertise to the Institute by facilitating the Institute's seminars, workshops and courses.

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Other services to the business community now include: individualized counseling for potential exporters and importers through the US Department of Commerce at IBIG's offices; counseling for potential and present business owners through the regional Small Business Development Center (SBDC), also offered at IBIG's offices; and the Women and Minority Business Owners Project. This program offers low-cost training to businesses owned by women or minorities and the opportunity for these business owners to be listed in the first-of-its kind Directory of Women and Minority Owned Businesses in Orange County.

The Institute also serves as a resource clearinghouse for local businesspeople through its linkages with influential agencies. For example, the Small Business Administration endorses open-to-the-public programs offered through IBIG. The Institute itself is co-sponsored by Orange County Community College and the Orange and Eastern Orange County Chambers of Commerce. Potential or present business owners are referred to the SBDC or to the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) for individualized counseling, and businesspersons can find out about the services offered by the New York State Department of Economic Development through the Institute.

The Institute operates in cooperation with other local agencies and organizations through co-sponsorship of programs pertinent to specific audiences within the business community. Many agencies and organizations have assisted IBIG in planning, implementing and promoting programs. Among them are: the local Cooperative Extension, the local chapter of the American Society for Personnel Administrators, the Private Industry Council, local hospitals, the local council of human service agencies, and several independent consulting firms in the area.

Another important service offered by the Institute is that of grant writer on behalf of local for-profit organizations to access training grants available from the New York State Department of Education. These funds, channeled through the Hudson Valley Regional Education Center, provide assistance to local businesses and industries who would not otherwise be able to afford the firm-specific training necessary to assist the company to create, improve, and retain job opportunities. These funds also enable organizations to promote better employee relations and increase productivity through enhancing employee skills and proficiencies.

Needs Change; Responses Must Be Timely, Appropriate

The subhead here could just as well be, "Evaluate, Evaluate, then Evaluate Again". In order to remain well-informed about the needs for training and retraining which exist in the community, data is continuously compiled. Participants in open-to-the-public and firm-specific training programs are formally surveyed at the program conclusion to ascertain their reaction to the program and their needs for additional training. Individual responses are confidential. In programs which are open to the public, participants are asked to provide demographic information about themselves in addition to their program evaluation. Individual responses are naturally kept in confidence, and in any situation, participants need not provide their names.

If a change is necessary to ensure that the programs more closely suit the needs of the participants, that change is instituted the next time the program is offered. (Necessary changes frequently cited by participants include making the program longer, or offering more opportunities for the instructor to utilize even more practical examples to illustrate training points. Each semester's program offerings are determined by the demand as demonstrated through program evaluations and as expressed by the business community by personal contact with IBIG staff. There are certain requirements which remain constant among participants: time and time again, participants stress that the training seminars, workshops and courses offered by the Institute should be brief, skills-oriented and low in cost.

In 1986, the reaction to public programs was very positive. Throughout the three semesters of course offerings in 1986, 84% of the participants felt that the program they attended met their expectations. Overall, 95% felt that the program merited a rating of excellent, very good or good on such elements as program organization, sufficiency of question and answer time, appropriateness and usefulness of handouts and visual aids, and clarity of the program intent and objectives.

When asked to state their needs for additional training, 1986 program participants mentioned 33 topics, 18 of which were already being offered. In 1987, seven more of the suggested training topics have been developed and implemented. The remaining eight topics requested involve specific computer software packages, many of which have been offered to employees at organizations on a firm-specific basis.

The demographics collected from participants in 1986 open-to-the-public programs showed that 68% of the participants felt the programs were inexpensive. (Participants also responded that in 71% of the cases, their employer was providing the funds for them to attend the program.) These results have shown that the employers, or the decision makers, in the community actively support the Institute's programs through subsidizing their employees' attendance.

Participants' input has also confirmed the Institute's belief that programs are more convenient if they are offered in the evening, once per week for several consecutive weeks, or in one-session, full-day seminars. 59% of respondents favored evening programs, and 37% favored one session, weekday programs.

In 1986, program participants held a variety of titles and were performing various functions within their organization. The job functions most frequently reported were, respectively: management, secretary, vice president, personnel, production assistant, clerk, and training. In terms of educational background, 53% of participants had completed high school, 34% had completed high school plus two years of college, 20% had completed high school plus four years of college, and 10% had attended graduate school.

The age of participants followed the national trend toward a more mature community college student: 63% of the 1986 program participants were between 21 and 50 years of age. Persons aged 31 to 40 represented 26% of the participants.

The salary level of participants ranged from $0 to over $50,000 per year. 19% of the participants reported earnings of $15,001 to $20,000. Another 16% earned from $30,001 to $50,000.

The information gathered from the program evaluation and participant background information forms is very valuable in program planning and marketing. Participants are willing to supply this information, and in fact many mention the fact that they appreciate being asked for their input. Each semester, there are approximately ten to twenty participants who forget to hand in their forms at the course conclusion. However, nearly every one of them spends the time and money to mail back the completed forms!

The reputation for concern and action which has helped the Institute grow has evolved from the fact that this input from program participants is indeed utilized almost immediately and is reflected in new programming and in new marketing strategies. The challenges now are: to continue to respond in a timely manner as the number of participants each semester continues to grow; and to solicit input from non-participants. The Institute, in conjunction with the college as a whole, is actively pursuing effective methods of conducting needs assessments in the community in an effort to ensure that the college's resources are being utilized in ways which truly allow the college to serve the needs of the community locally.

Written and Submitted By,

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INSTITUTE FOR BUSINESS, INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT

PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SAMPLE

Dear Program Participant:

In order to effectively meet the training needs of area business people, the Institute for Business, Industry and Government (IBIG) needs to identify some demographic characteristics of people attending IBIG programs. Would you please take a few moments to complete this survey? Thank you for your assistance.

Margaret G. Hoffman, Ph.D.
Executive Director

1. How do you feel about the cost of the program?

   _____Inexpensive _____Just Right _____Too Expensive

2. Who provided the funds for you to attend this program?

   _____You _____Your Employer _____Other (Please specify) _____

3. What is the most convenient time period for you to attend a training program? (Day, Evening, Weekend, Which day of the week)

   _____

4. What is the most convenient location? (Please specify town or city, and please suggest possible training sites such as schools, hotels, or other facilities).

   _____

5. Where do you live? (Please specify town or city) _____

6. In what town or city do you work? _____

7. What is the name of your employer? _____

8. What is your position in the organization? _____

9. What is your educational background?

	Attended	Graduated
High School	_____	_____
Community College	_____	_____
Tech School	_____	_____
4-year College	_____	_____
Graduate school	_____	_____

10. What is your age? _____

11. What is your salary level? (Please check one) $0 - 10,000_____ $10,001 - 15,000_____
    $15,001 - 20,000_____ $20,001 - 25,000_____ $25,001 - 30,000_____
    $30,000 - 50,000_____ Above 50,000_____

(987)

INSTITUTE FOR BUSINESS INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT

IBIG PROGRAM

SAMPLE

EVALUATION

Dear Program Participant:

It is important to the College and the Institute for Business, Industry, and Government (IBIG) that seminars, courses, and programs meet your expectations. Therefore, would you please take a few minutes to complete this program evaluation? Thank you for your assistance.

Margaret G. Hoffman, Ph.D.
Executive Director

1. Did this career seminar meet your expectations? ____YES ____NO
   If not, why not?_____

_____

	EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
2. Overall Program Organization	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
3. Overall Program Effectiveness	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
4. Was instructor well prepared for each class?	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
5. Question/answer and discussion time was sufficient?	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
6. Handouts and visual aids were appropriate and useful?	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
7. Course intent and objectives were clear and well presented?	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

8. Please identify the part of the program you found most helpful.

_____

_____

9. Do you have any comments to help the instructor improve this course?

_____

_____

(OVER)

10. What future programs/topics would be of interest to you?

_____.

11. How did you hear about this course? _____.

OPTIONAL:

NAME _____

COMPANY _____

INSTITUTE FOR BUSINESS INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT

REPORT ON PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION
1986

A new survey instrument was implemented in the Spring 1986 semester as part of IBIG's program evaluation procedure (see attached sample form). A report on the results of this data collection instrument follows.

DATA SUMMARY

1) How do you feel about the cost of the program?

16% Inexpensive 68% Just Right 16% Too Expensive

2) Who provided the funds for you to attend this program?

27% You 71% Your Employer 5% Other (Please specify) unspecified

3) What is the most convenient time period for you to attend a training program?

Evening: 59% Day: 27% Weekend: 7% (Mon - Thurs:)9% Mon/Fri: 1%)

4) What is the most convenient location?

OCCC/Middletown: 29%, Newburgh: 11%, BOCES/Goshen: 6%, Monroe: 5%, Port Jervis 2%; Chester 1%; Sullivan County: 1%.
Cornwall and Rockland County each got 1 vote.

5) Where do you live?

Middletown 29%; Newburgh 8%; Goshen 6%; Monroe 6%; Orange County 4%; Sullivan County 4%; Warwick 4%; Pine Bush 3%; Walden 2%.

6) In what location do you work?

Middletown 29%; Monroe 7%; Goshen 6%; Sullivan Cty. 5%; Orange Cty. 4%; Chester 4%; Walden 3%; New Windsor 3%.

7) What is the name of your employer?

OCCC 5%; Highland Telephone 4%; Orange & Rockland 2%.

8) What is your position in the organization?

Management 11%; Secretary 5%; Vice President 4%; Personnel 3%; Production Assistant 3%; Clerk 3%; Training 3%.

9) What is your educational background?

High School 53%; 2 yrs. college 34%; 4 yrs. college 20%; Grad School 10%; College 6%; Tech. college 6%

10) What is your age?

18 - 20:	1%	41 - 50:	19%
21 - 30:	18%	51 - 60:	7%
31 - 40:	26%	Over 60:	1%

11) Salary level:

$ -0-	-	10,000	7%
10,001	-	15,000	13%
15,001	-	20,000	19%
20,001	-	25,000	14%
25,001	-	30,000	9%
30,001	-	50,000	16%
Over $50,000			1%